



## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### PRIVACY ACT OF 1974; SYSTEM OF RECORDS

**AGENCY:** Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

**ACTION:** Notice of a Modified System of Records.

**SUMMARY:** As required by the Privacy Act of 1974, notice is hereby given that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is amending the system of records entitled, “Health Care Provider Credentialing and Privileging Records-VA” (77VA10A4) as set forth in the Federal Register 80 FR 36595. VA is amending the system of records by revising the System Number; Routine Uses of Records Maintained in the System and Policies; and Practices for Retention and Disposal of Records. VA is republishing the system notice in its entirety.

**DATES:** Comments on the amendment of this system of records must be received no later than **[Insert date 30 days after date of publication in the Federal Register]**. If no public comment is received during the period allowed for comment or unless otherwise published in the Federal Register by VA, the amended system will become effective **[Insert date 30 days after date of publication in the Federal Register]**.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments may be submitted through [www.Regulations.gov](http://www.Regulations.gov); by mail or hand-delivery to Director, Regulation Policy and Management (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Ave. NW, Room 1064, Washington, DC 20420; or by fax to (202) 273-9026 (not a toll-free number). Comments should indicate that they are submitted in response to “Health Care Provider Credentialing and Privileging Records-VA”. Copies of comments received will be available for public

inspection in the Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Room 1063B, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (except holidays). Please call (202) 461-4902 for an appointment. (This is not a toll-free number.) In addition, comments may be viewed online at [www.Regulations.gov](http://www.Regulations.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Privacy Officer, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Ave. NW., Washington, DC 20420, (704) 245-2492.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The System Number is being changed from (77VA10A4 to 77VA10E2E) to reflect the current organizational alignment.

The Routine Uses of Records Maintained in the System is amending the language in Routine Use #8 which states that disclosure of the records to the DoJ is a use of the information contained in the records that is compatible with the purpose for which VA collected the records. VA may disclose records in this system of records in legal proceedings before a court or administrative body after determining that the disclosure of the records to the court or administrative body is a use of the information contained in the records that is compatible with the purpose for which VA collected the records. This routine use will now state that release of the records to the DoJ is limited to circumstances where relevant and necessary to the litigation. VA may disclose records in this system of records in legal proceedings before a court or administrative body after determining that release of the records to the court or administrative body is limited to circumstances where relevant and necessary to the litigation.

Routine Use #22 has been amended by clarifying the language to state, “VA may disclose any information or records to appropriate agencies, entities, and persons when (1) VA suspects or has confirmed that there has been a breach of the system of records; (2) VA has determined that as a result of the suspected or confirmed breach there is a risk to individuals, VA (including its information systems, programs, and operations), the Federal Government, or national security; and (3) the disclosure made to such agencies, entities, or persons is reasonably necessary to assist in connection with VA efforts to respond to the suspected or confirmed breach or to prevent, minimize, or remedy such harm.”

Routine Use #25 which states, “VA may disclose information to the Department of Defense (DoD) from the joint platform electronic credentialing system being shared with DoD for credentialing/privileging purposes.” VA needs the ability to disclose limited information concerning the health care provider’s professional qualifications (professional education, training and current licensure/certification status), professional employment history, and current clinical privileges.

Routine use #26 is being added to state, “VA may disclose information to a former VA employee or contractor, as well as the authorized representative of a current or former employee or contractor of VA, in connection with or in consideration of the reporting of:

(a) Any payment for the benefit of the former VA employee or contractor that was made as the result of a settlement or judgment of a claim of medical malpractice, if an appropriate determination is made in accordance with Department policy that payment

was related to substandard care, professional incompetence, or professional misconduct on the part of the individual;

(b) A final decision which relates to possible incompetence or improper professional conduct that adversely affects the former employee's or contractor's clinical privileges for a period longer than 30 days; or

(c) The former employee's or contractor's surrender of clinical privileges or any restriction of such privileges while under investigation by the health care entity relating to possible incompetence or improper professional conduct to the National Practitioner Data Bank or the state licensing board in any state in which the individual is licensed, the VA facility is located, or an act or omission occurred upon which a medical malpractice claim was based." VA needs the ability to release medical record information to former employees for purposes of evidence files and Fair Hearing Process.

Routine use #27 is being added to state, "VA may disclose information to a former VA employee or contractor, as well as the authorized representative of a current or former employee or contractor of VA, in connection with or in consideration of reporting that the individual's professional health care activity so significantly failed to conform to generally accepted standards of professional medical practice as to raise reasonable concern for the health and safety of patients, to a Federal agency, a State or local government licensing board, or the Federation of State Medical Boards or a similar nongovernmental entity which maintains records concerning individuals' employment histories or concerning the issuance, retention, or revocation of licenses, certifications, or registration necessary to practice an occupation, profession, or specialty." VA needs

the ability to release medical record information to former employees for purposes of evidence files and Fair Hearing Process.

Routine use #28 is being added to state, “VA may disclose information from this system of records to another Federal agency or Federal entity, when VA determines that information from this system of records is reasonably necessary to assist the recipient agency or entity in (1) responding to a suspected or confirmed breach or (2) preventing, minimizing, or remedying the risk of harm to individuals, the recipient agency or entity (including its information systems, programs, and operations), the Federal Government, or national security, resulting from a suspected or confirmed breach.”

The Policies and Practices for Retention and Disposal of Records is being amended to include the merging of Service Level Files with the two-part Paper Credentialing and Privileging Records for VA Employees when a provider departs from VA (i.e., State Licensure Board Evidence Files, Exit Review Forms, Focused Professional Practice Evaluation (FPPE) and Ongoing Professional Practice Evaluations (OPPE) data collection). Exit Review forms, Service Level documentation, etc. must be maintained for 3 years after the individual separates and the files must be kept on site for 3 years. After the individual separates from VA employment or after reporting and retired to the Federal Records Center, they are maintained for 30 years and then destroyed.

**Signing Authority:** The Senior Agency Official for Privacy, or designee, approved this document and authorized the undersigned to sign and submit the document to the Office of the Federal Register for publication electronically as an official document of the Department of Veterans Affairs. James P. Gfrerer, Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology and Chief Information Officer, Department of Veterans Affairs, approved this document on September 5, 2019 for publication.

Dated: February 4, 2020.

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VA Privacy Service,  
Department of Veterans Affairs.

**SYSTEM NAME AND NUMBER:** Health Care Provider Credentialing and Privileging  
Records-VA (77VA10E2E)

**SECURITY CLASSIFICATION:** Unclassified.

**SYSTEM LOCATION:** Records are maintained at each Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care facility. Address locations for VA facilities are listed in VA Appendix 1 biennial publication of VA system of records. In addition, information from these records or copies of records may be maintained at the Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20420 and/or Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Offices. Records for those health care providers who are contractors in a VA health care facility or to VA for the delivery of health care to veterans and are credentialed by the contractor in accordance with Veterans Health Administration (VHA) policy, where credentialing information is received by VHA facilities, it will be maintained in accordance with this notice and VHA policy. Electronic copies of records may be maintained by VHA Office of Quality, Safety and Value (OQSV), a component thereof, or a contractor or subcontractor of VHA/OQSV. Backup copies of the electronic data warehouse are maintained at off-site locations.

**SYSTEM MANAGER(S):** Official responsible for policies and procedures: Director, Credentialing and Privileging Program, Office of Quality, Safety and Value (OQSV), Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20420. The System Manager is Marianne Chick, Director of Medical Staff Affairs, Marianne.Chick@va.gov, 919-474-3937. Officials maintaining the system: (1) The chief of staff at the VA health care facility where the provider made

application, is employed, or otherwise utilized; (2) the credentialing coordinator of the VA health care facility for individuals who made application for employment or other utilization, or providers currently or previously employed or otherwise utilized at; (3) human resources management offices of the VA health care facility for individuals who made application for employment or other utilization, or providers currently or previously employed or otherwise utilized; (4) VA Central Office or at a VISN location; The electronic data will be maintained by VHA/OQSV, a component thereof, or a contractor or subcontractor of VHA/OQSV.

**AUTHORITY FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE SYSTEM:** Title 38 U.S.C. 501(a) and section 7304(a)(2).

**PURPOSE(S) OF THE SYSTEM:** The information may be used for: Verifying the individual's credentials and qualifications for employment or utilization, appointment to the professional staff, and/or clinical privileges; advising prospective health care entity employers, health care professional licensing or monitoring bodies, the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB), or similar entities or activities of individuals covered by this system; accreditation of a facility by an entity such as the Joint Commission; audits, reviews and investigations conducted by staff of the health care facility, the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Directors and Division Offices, VA Central Office, VHA program offices, and the VA Office of Inspector General; law enforcement investigations; quality assurance audits, reviews and investigations; personnel management and evaluations; employee ratings and performance evaluations; and, employee disciplinary or other adverse action, including discharge. The records and information may be used for statistical analysis, to produce various management



reports, evaluate services, collection, distribution and utilization of resources, and provide clinical and administrative support to patient medical care.

**CATEGORIES OF INDIVIDUALS COVERED BY THIS SYSTEM:** The records include information concerning health care providers currently or formerly employed or otherwise utilized by VHA and individuals who apply to VHA for employment and are considered for employment or appointment as health care providers. These records will include information concerning individuals who through a contractual or other agreement may be, or are, providing health care to VA patients. This may include, but is not limited to, audiologists, dentists, dietitians, expanded-function dental auxiliaries, licensed practical or vocational nurses, nuclear medicine technologists, nurse anesthetists, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, occupational therapists, optometrists, clinical pharmacists, licensed physical therapists, registered kinesiotherapists, physician assistants, physicians, podiatrists, psychologists, registered respiratory therapists, certified respiratory therapy technicians, diagnostic and therapeutic radiology technologists, social workers, and speech pathologists.

**CATEGORIES OF RECORDS IN THE SYSTEM:** The records in the system consist of information related to:

(1) The credentialing (the review and verification of an individual's qualifications for employment or utilization, which includes licensure, registration or certification, professional education and training, employment history, experience, appraisals of past performance, health status, etc.) of applicants who are considered for employment and/or appointment, for providing health services under a contract or other agreement, and/or for appointment to the professional staff at a VHA health care facility.

- (2) The privileging (the process of reviewing and granting or denying a provider's request for clinical privileges to provide medical or other patient care services, within well-defined limits, which are based on an individual's professional license, registration or certification, experience, training, competence, health status, ability, and clinical judgment) health care providers who are permitted by law and by the medical facility to provide patient care independently and individuals whose duties and responsibilities are determined to be beyond the normal scope of activities for their profession;
- (3) The periodic reappraisal of health care providers' professional credentials and the reevaluation of the clinical competence of providers who have been granted clinical privileges; and/or
- (4) Records generated as part or result of accessing and reporting to the NPDB, and the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB).

The records may include individually identifiable information (e.g., name, date of birth, gender, Social Security number, national provider identification number and associated taxonomy codes, and/or other personal identification number), address information (e.g., home mailing address, home telephone number, email address, facsimile number), biometric data, information related to education and training (e.g., name of medical or professional school attended and date of graduation, name of training program, type of training, dates attended, and date of completion).

The records may also include information related to: The individual's license, registration or certification by a State licensing board and/or national certifying body (e.g., license number, expiration date, name and address of issuing office, status including any actions taken by the issuing office or any disciplinary board to include

previous or current restrictions, suspensions, limitations, or revocations); citizenship; honors and awards; type of appointment or utilization; service/product line; professional society membership; professional performance, experience, and judgment (e.g., documents reflecting work experience, appraisals of past and current performance and potential); educational qualifications (e.g., name and address of institution, level achieved, transcript, information related to continuing education); Drug Enforcement Administration and/or State controlled dangerous substance certification (e.g., current status, any revocations, suspensions, limitations, restrictions); information about mental and physical status; evaluation of clinical and/or technical skills; involvement in any administrative, professional or judicial proceedings, whether involving VA or not, in which professional malpractice on the individual's part is or was alleged; any actions, whether involving VA or not, which result in the limitation, reduction, revocation, or acceptance of surrender or restriction of the individual's clinical privileges; and, clinical performance information that is collected and used to support a determination of an individual's request for clinical privileges. Some information that is included in the record may be duplicated in an employee's official personnel folder.

**RECORD SOURCE CATEGORIES:** Information in this system of records is provided by the applicant/employee, or obtained from State licensing boards, Federation of State Medical Boards, National Council of State Boards of Nursing, National Practitioner Data Bank, professional societies, national certifying bodies, current or previous employers, other health care facilities and staff, references, educational institutions, medical schools, VA staff, patient, visitors, and VA patient medical records.

**ROUTINE USES OF RECORDS MAINTAINED IN THE SYSTEM, INCLUDING CATEGORIES OF USERS AND THE PURPOSES OF SUCH USES:**

1. A record from this system of records may be disclosed to any source from which additional information is requested (to the extent necessary and to identify the type of information requested), when necessary to obtain information relevant to a Department decision concerning the hiring or retention of an employee, the issuance or reappraisal of clinical privileges, the issuance of a security clearance, the conducting of a security or suitability investigation of an individual, the letting of a contract, the issuance of a license, grant, or other benefits; or in response to scarce or emergency needs of the Department or other entities when specific skills are required.
2. A record from this system of records may be disclosed to an agency in the executive, legislative, or judicial branch, or the District of Columbia's Government in response to its request, or at the initiation of VA, information in connection with the hiring of an employee, appointment to the professional staff, the issuance of a security clearance, the conducting of a security or suitability investigation of an individual, the letting of a contract, the issuance of a license, grant, or other benefit by the agency, or the lawful statutory or administrative purpose of the agency to the extent that the information is relevant and necessary to the requesting agency's decision; or at the initiative of VA, to the extent the information is relevant and necessary to an investigative purpose of the agency.
3. Disclosure may be made to a Congressional office from the record or an individual in response to an inquiry from the Congressional office made at the request of that individual.

4. Disclosure may be made to NARA (National Archives and Records Administration) in records management inspections conducted under authority of title 44 United States Code.

5. Information from this system of records may be disclosed to a Federal agency or to a State or local government licensing board and/or to the Federation of State Medical Boards or a similar non-government entity which maintains records concerning individuals' employment histories or concerning the issuance, retention or revocation of licenses, certifications, or registration necessary to practice an occupation, profession or specialty, in order for the Department to obtain information relevant to a Department decision concerning the hiring, utilization, appointment, retention or termination of individuals covered by this system or to inform a Federal agency or licensing boards or the appropriate nongovernment entities about the health care practices of a currently employed, appointed, otherwise utilized, terminated, resigned, or retired health care employee or other individuals covered by this system whose professional health care activity so significantly failed to meet generally accepted standards of clinical practice as to raise reasonable concern for the safety of patients. These records may also be disclosed as part of an ongoing computer-matching program to accomplish these purposes.

6. Information may be disclosed to non-Federal sector (i.e., State, or local governments) agencies, academic affiliates, organizations, boards, bureaus, or commissions (e.g., the Joint Commission). Such disclosures may be made only when: (1) The records are properly constituted in accordance with VA requirements; (2) the records are accurate, relevant, timely, and complete; and (3) the disclosure is in the

best interest of the Government (e.g., to obtain accreditation or other approval rating).

When cooperation with the non-Federal sector entity, through the exchange of individual records, directly benefits VA's completion of its mission, enhances personnel management functions, or increases the public confidence in VA's or the Federal Government's role in the community, then the Government's best interests are served. Further, only such information that is clearly relevant and necessary for accomplishing the intended uses of the information as certified by the receiving entity is to be furnished.

7. Information may be disclosed to a State or national certifying body which has the authority to make decisions concerning the issuance, retention or revocation of licenses, certifications or registrations required to practice a health care profession, when requested in writing by an investigator or supervisory official of the licensing entity or national certifying body for the purpose of making a decision concerning the issuance, retention or revocation of the license, certification or registration of a named health care professional.

8. VA may disclose information in this system of records to the Department of Justice (DoJ), either on VA's initiative or in response to DoJ's request for the information, after either VA or DoJ determines that such information is relevant to DoJ's representation of the United States or any of its components in legal proceedings before a court or adjudicative body, provided that, in each case, the agency also determines prior to disclosure that release of the records to the DoJ is limited to circumstances where relevant and necessary to the litigation. VA may disclose records in this system of records in legal proceedings before a court or administrative body after determining that

release of the records to the court or administrative body is limited to circumstances where relevant and necessary to the litigation.

9. Hiring, appointment, performance, or other personnel credentialing related information may be disclosed to any facility or agent with which there is, or there is proposed to be, an affiliation, sharing agreement, partnership, contract, or similar arrangement, where required for establishing, maintaining, or expanding any such relationship.

10. Information concerning a health care provider's professional qualifications and clinical privileges may be disclosed to a VA patient, or the representative or guardian of a patient who due to physical or mental incapacity lacks sufficient understanding and/or legal capacity to make decisions concerning his/her medical care, who is receiving or contemplating receiving medical or other patient care services from the provider when the information is needed by the patient or the patient's representative or guardian in order to make a decision related to the initiation of treatment, continuation or discontinuation of treatment, or receiving a specific treatment that is proposed or planned by the provider. Disclosure will be limited to information concerning the health care provider's professional qualifications (professional education, training and current licensure/certification status), professional employment history, and current clinical privileges.

11. VA may disclose any information in this system, except the names and home addresses of veterans and their dependents, which is relevant to a suspected or reasonably imminent violation of law, whether civil, criminal or regulatory in nature and whether arising by general or program statute or by regulation, rule or order issued

pursuant thereto, to a State, local or foreign agency charged with the responsibility of investigating or prosecuting such violation, or charged with enforcing or implementing the statute, regulation, rule or order. VA may also disclose the names and addresses of veterans and their dependents to a Federal agency charged with the responsibility of investigating or prosecuting civil, criminal or regulatory violations of law, or charged with enforcing or implementing the statute, regulation, rule or order issued pursuant thereto.

12. To disclose to the Federal Labor Relations Authority (including its General Counsel) information related to the establishment of jurisdiction, the investigation and resolution of allegations of unfair labor practices, or information in connection with the resolution of exceptions to arbitration awards when a question of material fact is raised; to disclose information in matters properly before the Federal Service Impasses Panel, and to investigate representation petitions and conduct or supervise representation elections.

13. To disclose to the VA-appointed representative of an employee all notices, determinations, decision, or other written communications issued to the employee in connection with an examination ordered by VA under fitness-for-duty examination procedures or Agency-filed disability retirement procedures.

14. To disclose information to officials of the Merit Systems Protection Board, when requested in connection with appeals, special studies of the civil service and other merit systems, review of rules and regulations, investigation of alleged or possible prohibited personnel practices, and such other functions, promulgated in 5 U.S.C. 1205 and 1206, or as may be authorized by law.

15. To disclose information to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission when requested in connection with investigations of alleged or possible discriminatory



practices, examination of Federal affirmative employment programs, or the other functions of the Commission as authorized by law or regulation.

16. To disclose the information listed in 5 U.S.C. 7114(b)(4) to officials of labor organizations recognized under 5 U.S.C., chapter 71 when relevant and necessary to their duties of exclusive representation concerning personnel policies, practices, and matters affecting working conditions.

17. Identifying information in this system, including name, address, social security number and other information as is reasonably necessary to identify such individual, may be disclosed to the NPDB at the time of hiring, appointment, utilization, and/or clinical privileging/re-privileging of physicians, dentists and other health care practitioners, and other times as deemed necessary by VA, in order for VA to obtain information relevant to a Department decision concerning the hiring, appointment, utilization, privileging/re-privileging, retention or termination of the individual.

18. Relevant information from this system of records may be disclosed to the NPDB and/or State Licensing Board in the State(s) in which a practitioner is licensed, in which the VA facility is located, and/or in which an act or omission occurred upon which a medical malpractice claim was based when VA reports information concerning: (1) Any payment for the benefit of a physician, dentist, or other licensed health care practitioner which was made as the result of a settlement or judgment of a claim of medical malpractice if an appropriate determination is made in accordance with agency policy that payment was related to substandard care, professional incompetence or professional misconduct on the part of the individual; (2) a final decision which

relates to possible incompetence or improper professional conduct that adversely affects the clinical privileges of a physician or dentist for a period longer than 30 days; or, (3) the acceptance of the surrender of clinical privileges or any restriction of such privileges by a physician or dentist either while under investigation by the health care entity relating to possible incompetence or improper professional conduct, or in return for not conducting such an investigation or proceeding. These records may also be disclosed as part of a computer-matching program to accomplish these purposes.

19. In response to a request about a specifically identified individual covered by this system from a prospective Federal or non-Federal health care entity employer, the following information may be disclosed: (a) Relevant information concerning the individual's professional employment history including the clinical privileges held by the individual; (b) relevant information concerning a final decision that results in a voluntary or involuntary limitation, reduction or loss of clinical privileges; and (c) relevant information concerning any payment that is made in settlement (or partial settlement) of, or in satisfaction of a judgment in, a medical malpractice action or claim and, when through a peer review process that is undertaken pursuant to VA policy, negligence, professional incompetence, responsibility for improper care, and/or professional misconduct has been assigned to the individual.

20. Disclosure may be made to any Federal, State, local, tribal or private entity in response to a request concerning a specific provider for the purposes of credentialing providers who provide health care at multiple sites or move between sites. Such disclosures may be made only when: (1) the records are properly constituted in accordance with VA requirements; (2) the records are accurate, relevant,

timely, and complete; and (3) disclosure is in the best interests of the Government (i.e., to meet the requirements of contracts, sharing agreements, partnerships, etc.). When exchange of credentialing information through the exchange of individual records, directly benefits VA's completion of its mission, enhances public confidence in VA's or Federal Government's role in the delivery of health care, then the best interests of the Government are served.

21. Disclosure may be made to individuals, organizations, private or public agencies, or other entities or individuals with whom VA has a contract or agreement to perform such services as VA may deem practicable for the purposes of laws administered by VA, in order for the contractor, subcontractor, public or private agency, or other entity or individual with whom VA has an agreement or contract to perform the services of the contract or agreement. This routine use includes disclosures by the individual or entity performing the service for VA to any secondary entity or individual to perform an activity that is necessary for individuals, organizations, private or public agencies, or other entities or individuals with whom VA has a contract or agreement to provide the service to VA.

22. VA may disclose any information or records to appropriate agencies, entities, and persons when (1) VA suspects or has confirmed that there has been a breach of the system of records; (2) VA has determined that as a result of the suspected or confirmed breach there is a risk to individuals, VA (including its information systems, programs, and operations), the Federal Government, or national security; and (3) the disclosure made to such agencies, entities, or persons is reasonably necessary to assist in

connection with VA efforts to respond to the suspected or confirmed breach or to prevent, minimize, or remedy such harm.

23. Disclosure to other Federal agencies may be made to assist such agencies in preventing and detecting possible fraud or abuse by individuals in their operations and programs.

24. VA may disclose information concerning a health care provider's professional qualification which may be published on publicly facing VA owned or managed internet Web sites. Information to be displayed include the name of provider, gender, name of professional school, post-graduate training program, State of licensure, and board certification.

25. VA may disclose information to DoD from the joint platform electronic credentialing system being shared with DoD for credentialing/privileging purposes.

26. VA may disclose information to a former VA employee or contractor, as well as the authorized representative of a current or former employee or contractor of VA, in connection with or in consideration of the reporting of:

(a) Any payment for the benefit of the former VA employee or contractor that was made as the result of a settlement or judgment of a claim of medical malpractice, if an appropriate determination is made in accordance with Department policy that payment was related to substandard care, professional incompetence, or professional misconduct on the part of the individual;

(b) A final decision which relates to possible incompetence or improper professional conduct that adversely affects the former employee's or contractor's clinical privileges for a period longer than 30 days; or (c) The former employee's or contractor's surrender

of clinical privileges or any restriction of such privileges while under investigation by the health care entity relating to possible incompetence or improper professional conduct to the NPDB or the state licensing board in any state in which the individual is licensed, the VA facility is located, or an act or omission occurred upon which a medical malpractice claim was based.

27. VA may disclose information to a former VA employee or contractor, as well as the authorized representative of a current or former employee or contractor of VA, in connection with or in consideration of reporting that the individual's professional health care activity so significantly failed to conform to generally accepted standards of professional medical practice as to raise reasonable concern for the health and safety of patients, to a Federal agency, a State or local government licensing board, or the Federation of State Medical Boards or a similar nongovernmental entity which maintains records concerning individuals' employment histories or concerning the issuance, retention, or revocation of licenses, certifications, or registration necessary to practice an occupation, profession, or specialty.

28. VA may disclose information from this system to another Federal agency or Federal entity, when VA determines that information from this system of records is reasonably necessary to assist the recipient agency or entity in (1) responding to a suspected or confirmed breach or (2) preventing, minimizing, or remedying the risk of harm to individuals, the recipient agency or entity (including its information systems, programs, and operations), the Federal Government, or national security, resulting from a suspected or confirmed breach.

**POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR STORAGE OF RECORDS:** Records are maintained on paper documents or in electronic format. Information included in the record may be stored on microfilm, magnetic tape or disk. Records are maintained at the employing VHA health care facility. If the individual transfers to another VHA health care facility, the record is transferred to the new location, if appropriate.

**POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR RETRIEVAL OF RECORDS:** Records are retrieved by the names and Social Security number or other assigned identifiers, e.g., the National Provider Identifier (NPI), of the individuals on whom they are maintained.

**POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF RECORDS:** Paper records are retired to the VA Records Center and Vault (VA RC&V) 3 years after the individual separates from VA employment or when no longer utilized by VA (in some cases, records may be maintained at the facility for a longer period of time) and are destroyed 30 years after separation. Paper records for applicants who are not selected for VA employment or appointment are destroyed 2 years after non-selection or when no longer needed for reference, whichever is sooner. Electronic records are transferred to the Director, Credentialing and Privileging Program, Office of Quality, Safety and Value, VA Central Office, when the provider leaves the facility. Information stored on electronic storage media is maintained and disposed of in accordance with records disposition authority approved by the Archivist of the United States. The merge of Service Level Files with the two-part Paper Credentialing and Privileging Records for VA Employees when a provider departs from VA (i.e., State Licensure Board Evidence Files, Exit Review Forms, and Focused Professional Practice Evaluation (FPPE)/Ongoing Professional Practice Evaluations (OPPE) data collection). Exit Review forms,

Service Level documentation etc. must be maintained for 3 years after the individual separates and the files must be kept on site for 3 years. After the individual separates from VA employment or after reporting and retired to the Federal Records Center, they are maintained for 30 years and then destroyed.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE, TECHNICAL, AND PHYSICAL SAFEGUARDS:**

1. Access to VA working and storage areas in VA health care facilities is restricted to VA employees on a “need to know” basis; strict control measures are enforced to ensure that disclosure to these individuals is also based on this same principle.

Generally, VA file areas are locked after normal duty hours and the health care facilities are protected from outside access by the Federal Protective Service or other security personnel.

2. Access to computer room within the health care facilities is generally limited by appropriate locking devices and restricted to authorized VA employees and vendor personnel. Automated data processing peripheral devices are generally placed in secure areas (areas that are locked or have limited access) or are otherwise protected.

Information in the Veterans Information Systems Technology Architecture (VistA) system may be accessed by authorized VA employees. Access to file information is controlled at two levels; the system recognizes authorized employees by a series of individually unique passwords/codes as a part of each data message, and the employees are limited to only that information in the file that is needed in the performance of their official duties.

3. Access to records in VA Central Office and the VISN directors and division offices is only authorized to VA personnel on a “need-to-know” basis. There is limited access to the building with visitor control by security personnel.

4. The automated system is Internet enabled and will conform to all applicable Federal Regulations concerning information security. The automated system is protected by a generalized security facility and by specific security techniques used within the application that accesses the data file and may include individually unique passwords/codes and may utilize Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) personal certificates. Both physical and system security measures will meet or exceed those required to provide an adequate level of protection for host systems. Access to file information is limited to only that information in the file that is needed in the performance of official duties. Access to computer rooms is restricted generally by appropriate locking devices to authorized operational personnel. Information submitted to the automated electronic system is afforded the same protections as the data that are maintained in the original files. Remote on-line access from other agencies to the data storage site is controlled in the same manner. Access to the electronic data is supported by encryption and the Internet server is insulated by a firewall.

**RECORD ACCESS PROCEDURE:** Individuals seeking information regarding access to and contesting of records in this system may write, call or visit the VA facility location where they made application for employment or appointment, or are or were employed.

**CONTESTING RECORD PROCEDURES:** (See Record Access Procedures).



**NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE:** Individuals who wish to determine whether this system of records contains information about them should contact the VA facility location at which they made application for employment or appointment or are or were employed. Inquiries should include the employee's full name, social security number, date of application for employment or appointment or dates of employment or appointment and return address.

**EXEMPTIONS PROMULGATED FOR THE SYSTEM:** None.

**HISTORY:** Last full publication provided in 80 FR 36596 dated Jun 25, 2015.

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